

Maine Appalachian Trail Land Trust

Fall 2016 Newsletter



Almost all of the Maine A.T. landscape pictured here remains unprotected.

Appalachian Trail Landscape Conservation Initiative

In December of 2015, the Appalachian Trail Conservancy and the National Park Service hosted a conference focused on conservation of the landscape up and down the entire length of the Appalachian Trail. Since 2004, the Maine Appalachian Trail Land Trust has been working to preserve and protect the land *along* the A.T. in Maine for public benefit. The AT Landscape Conservation Initiative couldn't come at a better time.

If you look at a map of the entire Appalachian National Scenic Trail corridor – the land that comprises the A.T. and is under the jurisdiction of the National Park Service – you will see many areas where the trail runs through National Parks, National Forests and state parks. There's Great Smoky Mountains National Park, the White Mountain National Forest, Harriman State Park, Shenandoah National Park, and so on. These are areas where the A.T. landscape is well protected – from development, from energy installations, from heavy logging activity, and more. What you will also see on your map of the A.T. is that, with a few exceptions, Maine's A.T. is without these large protected areas.

The photo above was taken from the A.T. at Height of Land on Route 17, looking down to Old Blue Mountain from north to south. For this entire stretch of Maine's A.T., the protected trail corridor is only about one thousand feet wide. Elephant Mountain, which is the rounded summit on the horizon, lies outside the trail corridor and is privately owned. Only the very top of the ridgeline is in the National Park Service Trail corridor and is conserved.

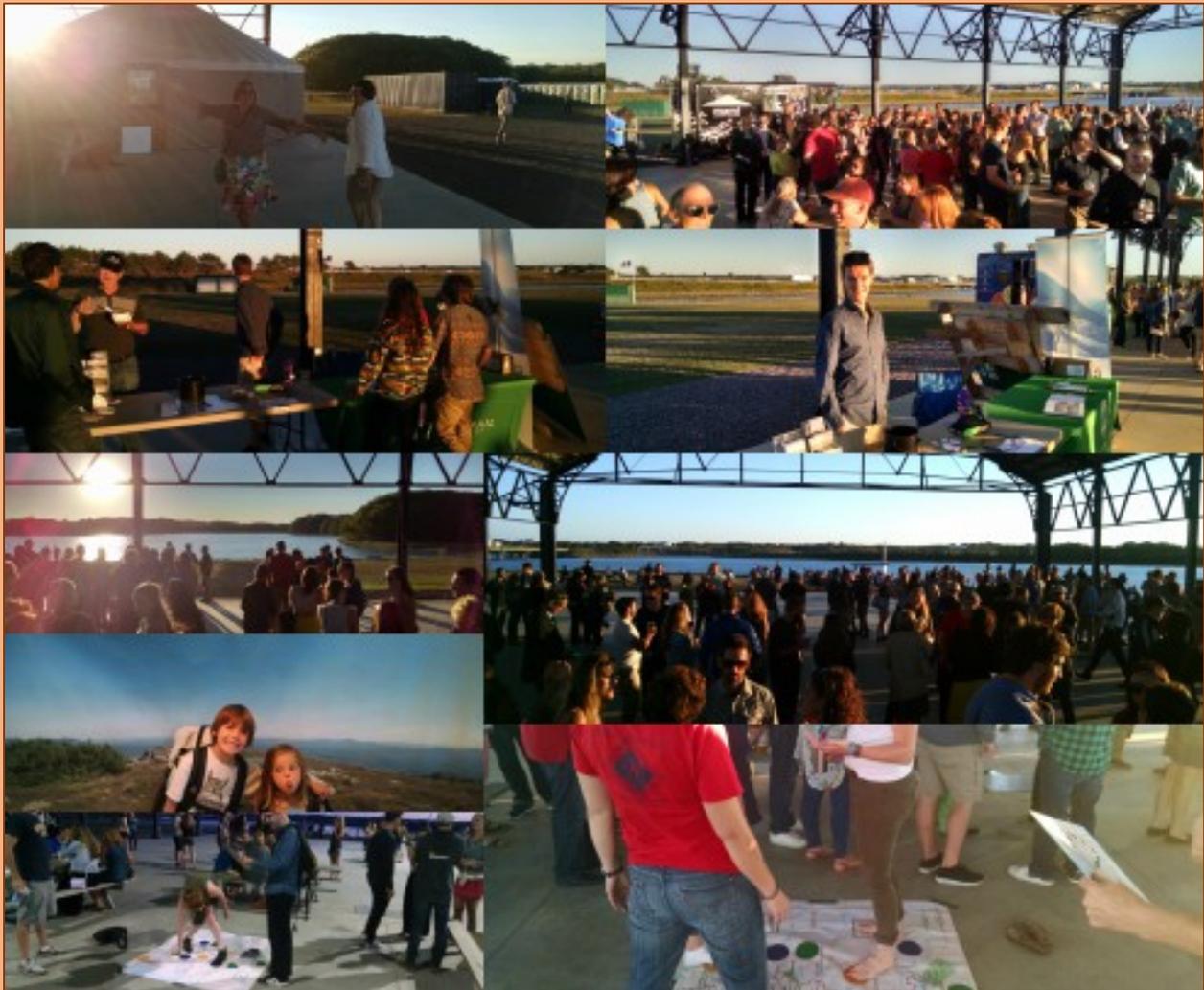
There are other places on the Appalachian Trail that are in need of protection but Maine has the largest areas of remote, forested landscapes, far from development and possessing great opportunities for solitude and the experience of wilderness. In 2016, ATC and NPS reconvened the landscape conservation conference after a year of behind-the-scenes work, and the Appalachian Trail Landscape Conservation Initiative was formally launched. The original vision of the A.T. as promulgated by Benton MacKaye in 1921 was of a "backbone of a super reservation and primeval recreation ground". In other words, the A.T. was meant to be a trail running through a protected landscape. Now, with the launching of this initiative, organizations up and down the entire A.T. are working together towards this goal. The Maine Appalachian Trail Land Trust has launched our Appalachian Trail Maine: Next Century program and continues to work on conservation projects in the Maine landscape. But we are also working at the national level with dozens of other organizations, all focused on a common goal: protecting the Appalachian Trail landscape for future generations.

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Portland Greendrinks

Portland Greendrinks is a non-profit organization dedicated to raising environmental awareness by hosting social events in the Portland area that focus on a specific non-profit organization each month. Maine Appalachian Trail Land Trust was fortunate enough to be the featured non-profit for September. The event was hosted at Thompson's Point and breweries Peak Organic, Allagash, Baxter Brewing, Sebago, Urban Farm Fermentory and Green Bee Soda all provided drinks for the approximately 500 attendees. We had activities and displays highlighting Maine's Appalachian Trail landscape, which included selfie stations for photo backdrops and Maine A.T. Twister. Partner organization Maine Appalachian Trail Club also had a table with information about the great work they do on the A.T. Hyperlite Mountain Gear, an outfitter based in Biddeford, donated two of their signature backpacks for raffle prizes. One winner sent us a photo from the top of Katahdin a few weeks later, with the pack. It was a great event for promoting this landscape of national significance for a great audience!



Stephen & Tabitha King Foundation Grant



We are pleased to announce that the Stephen & Tabitha King Foundation has awarded a grant of \$9,000 for the Appalachian Trail Maine: Next Century program! These funds will go towards implementation of all three facets of the program. Thanks to STK for your assistance!

Community Update



- The **Kingfield Trail Town** ceremony was held on September 10th, making the town the fourth A.T. community in Maine. There were lots of political endorsements and great food served courtesy of the citizens of Kingfield. The event was held in conjunction with the Kingfield Bicentennial Celebration. Congratulations Kingfield!
- The **Appalachian Trail partners hike** was held on October 14th. Representatives from ATC and MATC had an outing from Height of Land into the State of Maine's Four Ponds unit. The annual partners hike is organized by MATC and is a great chance for A.T. organizations to catch up after a busy summer of trail maintenance and field visits.
- Our **Winter Hikes** will be starting up once the snow gets deep enough! Possible hikes (typically snowshoes) include Buck Hill, Table Rock, Caribou Mountain, Spruce Mountain/Four Ponds and Burnt Hill (Carrabassett Valley). Check the Events Calendar on our website for more information and dates. These hikes are free and open to all!
- Special thanks to **Toad & Co. and Congress Squared restaurant** in Portland for sponsoring the Maine Appalachian Trail Land Trust for two events. The restaurant invited us to take part in their Monday's Matter program – donating a portion of their Monday gross sales to the Land Trust for a month. Toad & Co. invited us to table their annual warehouse sale and will also be donating a portion of those sales to Maine Appalachian Trail Land Trust. Thanks guys!

Project Update



- **Mount Abraham Conservation Easement Sign.** The Maine Appalachian Trail Land Trust has its first sign! This photo (which is blurry due to the snow and rain on the camera lens) shows a sign at the property boundary of the Mount Abraham ecological reserve area. The Land Trust will be putting up signs in locations depending on our stewardship obligations.
- **Redington Forest.** Due to a backlog of Land For Maine's Future projects, Redington Forest has been delayed but is still on track to be completed in the spring. We had some great site visits during the summer – the data we've collected has revealed this 10,000-acre property to be a truly special place and of great benefit to the Appalachian Trail landscape.
- **Trademark.** As part of the Maine's High Peaks branding process, the Maine Appalachian Trail Land Trust has acquired the trademark to the term "Maine's High Peaks". This was a collaborative effort among many partners in the community and will ensure that the term can be used for economic development and promotion of activities in the High Peaks area. Look for the brown road signs and kiosks in Kingfield, Stratton, Rangeley and other areas!
- **Appalachian Trail Maine: Next Century.** In conjunction with the A.T. Landscape Conservation Initiative, we are continuing our program of prioritizing Maine's A.T. landscape for the NPS' next phase. Look for more information – including our GIS portal – in the spring.

Board Member Profile: Pete Ventre



Pete Ventre (center) on the Berry Picker's Trail with his wife Liz (foreground, in sunglasses).

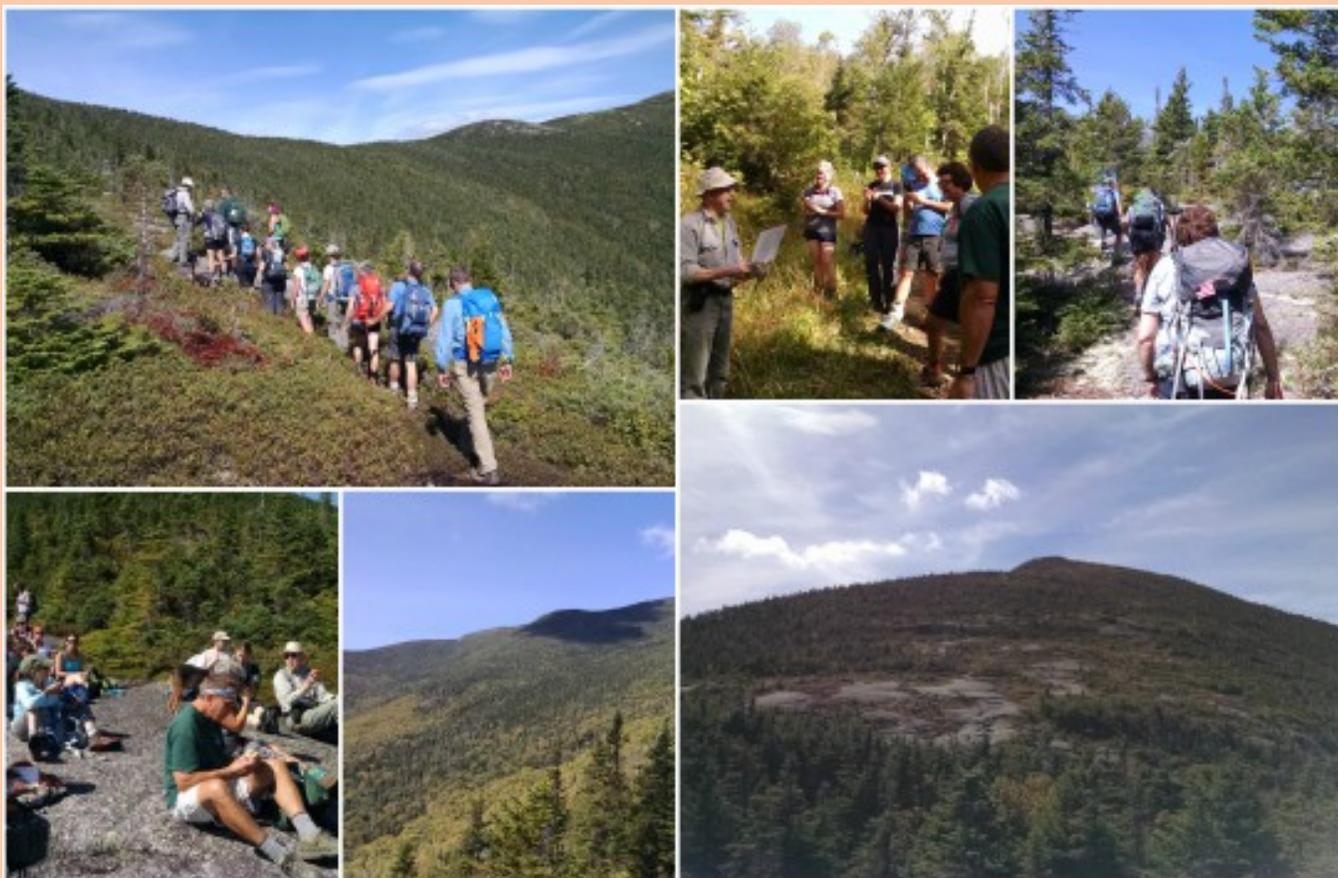
- **How did you first hear about the Maine A.T. Land Trust?** *I was aware of the MATLT, but did not have a good sense of its mission or what it did, until I had a client who is passionate about land preservation and particularly the High Peaks region of western Maine, introduced me formally to the organization. This client knew that I loved to hike and that I believe strongly in providing access to the great outdoors for all.*
- **What made you want to get involved?** *If you love the outdoors and readily available access to it, you love Maine! While Maine is only a couple to a few hours away from some of the most congested places in the US, we offer visitors the opportunity to escape the city/suburban life and truly be close to nature. Closeness to the eastern urban centers also puts pressure on all our recreation lands, coupled with the demise of the paper industry in Maine and the sale of many millions of acres of timberland, made me realize that things were changing fast for many of our most remote Maine areas. The AT offers one of the most unique hiking experiences in Maine. The lands surrounding the AT are subject to those same risks, and I felt that anything I could do to help preserve them was worth doing.*
- **How are you involved?** *I serve as Board member and finance committee member.*
- **What is your background - where are you from?** *I was born in Boston and grew up in Methuen, MA. 25 miles to the north. I am from a larger Catholic family and our church sponsored a Boy Scout Troop. Our Scoutmaster was an avid camper and hiker, not of the car camping variety. He introduced me to hiking and backpacking, and under his leadership every month of the year we'd go on at least one adventure. I attended the University of Massachusetts in Amherst and graduated from the Isenberg Business School with a degree in accounting. I spent the next decade working in public accounting before marrying my lovely wife Liz and moving to Maine, where we have been for 27 years now. In Maine I have worked for a couple large insurance companies and for the last fifteen years I have worked to help business owners obtain financing to grow their businesses or help them sell their businesses.*
- **Where did you work prior to working in conservation?** *I have always worked in as accounting/finance capacity. I have volunteered in a number of organizations over the years including the Greater Portland Chamber of Commerce and the Pine Tree Council Boy Scouts, serving southern and western Maine. I continue to volunteer for my church and presently serve as the volunteer Treasurer at my church and the Portland Yacht Club.*
- **What do you see as the most important issues in land conservation in Maine today?** *The most important land conservation issue for me in Maine is to preserve the pristine nature we enjoy here, where ever it may be in our State and at the same time increase access to Maine's citizens to such lands.*

Berry Pickers' Trail Opening Weekend

The Maine Appalachian Trail Land Trust had a GREAT outing for the Great Maine Outdoor Weekend on Saturday, September 17th. The weather was perfect, we had a great (very large!) group and we accomplished our goal of putting up the first signs for the Berry Pickers' Trail.

One group hiked up to the summits of both Saddleback and The Horn, one accompanied Dave Field on a loop hike over Saddleback to Eddy Pond and back to the car spot on the Fly Rod Crosby Trail, and went to the junction with the Appalachian Trail between Saddleback and The Horn, where the Berry Pickers' Trail ends. After meeting at the ATV gate on the Fly Rod Crosby Trail – which is a multi-use trail, allowing hikers, bikers, ATV riders, cross country skiers and snowmobilers – we proceeded up to the actual trailhead of the Berry Pickers' Trail, which is located at the bridge crossing Winship Stream. One volunteer (thanks Rob!) – carried a post to put up at the trailhead, with a sign describing the history of the trail, mileage and other information. There will be a permanent sign up in the spring.

Thanks to MATC and Dave Field for helping to create this trail. And thanks to all our volunteers who came out and enjoyed the inaugural hike!



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We need your help! The Maine Appalachian Trail Land Trust is currently working on *four* different projects to conserve over 27,000 acres of land along the Appalachian Trail as part of our **Appalachian Trail Maine: Next Century** program. We are taking on stewardship and land management responsibilities to ensure that these lands remain open to public use! Please consider giving today - \$10, \$50, \$100 – because every bit helps and we provide real conservation value for your donation.

To make a donation, please send in this form with your check or head over to <http://matlt.org/support-our-work/> to make your contribution online. **We also accept gifts of stock and can work with your financial advisors.** Please call us at 207-808-2073 or email us at info@matlt.org if you'd like to discuss giving options with our staff.



Thank you for your continuing support of the Maine Appalachian Trail Land Trust! Your donation supports our ongoing project work and allows us to continue operations, fund stewardship activities and protect land along the Appalachian Trail.

_____ \$1,000 _____ \$500 _____ \$100 _____ \$50 _____ \$35 _____ \$10 \$ _____ (other amount)

Please make checks payable to: **“Maine Appalachian Trail Land Trust”**

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Your donation is tax deductible. Maine Appalachian Trail Land Trust is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization.